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The Newsletter for Buckle Up America  
Summer 2001

# click.

IDEAS • INSPIRATION • SCIENCE

## Region-wide “Click It or Ticket” boosts seat belt use in 8 States

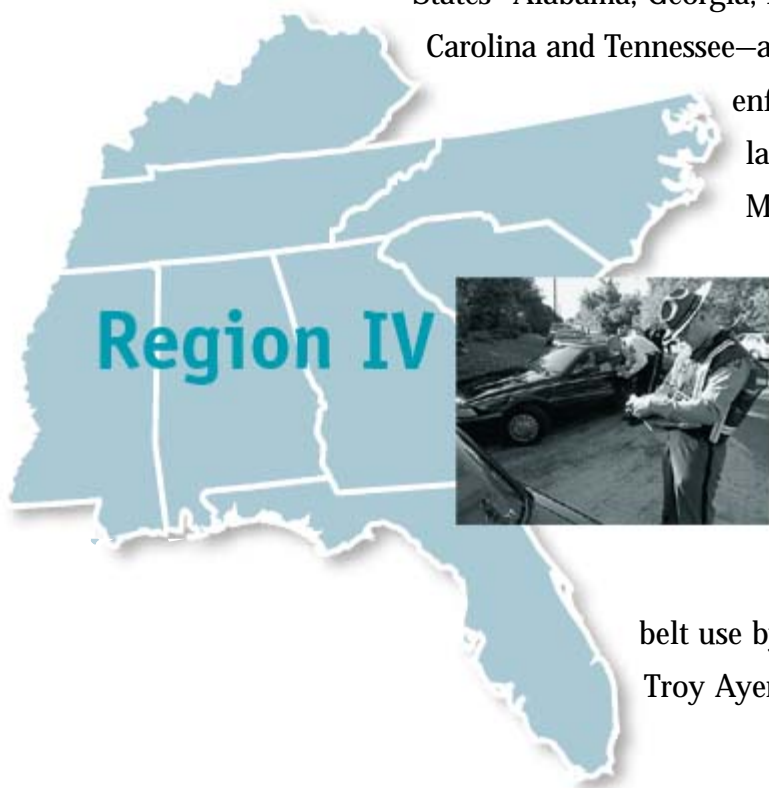
An unprecedented region-wide “Click It or Ticket” Memorial Day Mobilization Campaign in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Region IV boosted seat belt use to 74% from 65%—moving the region from six percentage points below the national average to three points above in a single month.

After the May 7-June 3 media and enforcement campaign, the region’s eight States—Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee—all saw solid increases in seat belt use at the height of enforcement during the campaign. Tennessee had the largest gain—20 percentage points—followed by Mississippi, which added 13 percentage points. Kentucky

gained 10 percentage points, as did Georgia, which has a standard enforcement law. The region’s two other standard enforcement states—Alabama and North Carolina—also had significant increases (see chart, page 4).

“Within just a few months, it looks like we are going to reach our goal of increasing seat belt use by 10 percentage points,” said Region IV Administrator Troy Ayers. If maintained for one year regionwide, that rate

*continued on page 4*





## FIRST PERSON: BARBARA PRZYSIECKI

**Hometown:** Howell, Michigan

**Buckled up since:** 1998

### Barbara's story:

As a child, I remember my family cutting the seat belts out of our cars. Seat belts got in the way. For years, my husband and I never wore them. So we never imagined that one day we would owe so much to two things: seat belts and our grandson.

In May 1998, my husband, Ron, and I were heading home from a pleasant Memorial Day weekend at our family's lakeside cabin in north-central Michigan. Our son Brian and our eight-year-old grandson Devon, who had joined us, had left a half-hour earlier, hopping into Brian's 1985 pickup as my husband and I closed up the cabin. As we crept along in holiday traffic, we were routed off the highway because of a serious crash. After going around the accident, I got a page from our daughter-in-law. My heart sank. I knew immediately that the crash we had just passed involved my boys. We drove

back past the scene of the accident and saw how awful it was. A tow truck was preparing to haul away the totaled truck. We asked a police officer if the truck's occupants had lived. They had. We rushed to the hospital in nearby Owosso.

Brian was making a left turn when a car slammed into Brian's pickup. It was



totaled—and they might have both been thrown out of the truck and killed except for one little conversation just 20 minutes before the crash.

Leaving McDonald's that evening, young Devon slid next to his dad, buckled his seat

belt and turned to his father as Brian started the car. Brian hadn't buckled up. "Daddy," Devon said, "please put on your seat belt."

And he did.

Devon, whose forehead had hit the window in the crash, needed minor plastic surgery on his face. But he and his father were released to us just eight hours after the accident. That night, we took our bruised and cut boys home. I felt so blessed that I made the decision to try and do something positive out of this incident. I worked with Michigan's secretary of State to successfully lobby for standard enforcement of Michigan's seat belt law—that is, to have it enforced the same way other traffic laws are enforced.

Today, I wear my seat belt every time I start my car. So does the rest of my family. We are fortunate. The results of that car crash could have been very different, but thanks to Devon, an eight-year-old who knows that buckling up can truly save lives, we will be going back to the cabin this year—together.

# click.

The Newsletter for Buckle Up America

**Published by:**

National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration

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U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration

## In focus at Buckle Up America

### Buckle Up America Week (May 21–28)

**The planner:** With the theme "Every Trip. Every Time," the May 2001 Buckle Up America Week/Operation ABC Mobilization planner highlighted seat belt and child safety seat enforcement in local areas—getting people to buckle up on short, routine trips. For copies of the planner, visit NHTSA's Web site at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

**The kickoff:** In Washington, the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign launched the Operation ABC Mobilization with a checkpoint spotlighting the enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws. More than 11,000 law enforcement agencies throughout the country participated—the highest total ever. And in Los Angeles, NHTSA rolled out a nationwide campaign to promote seat belt use among Hispanics with the message "*Cuida tu vida. Ponte el cinturón*" (Take Care of Your Life. Buckle Up). The Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, the National Hispanic Medical Association and corporate partner Pep Boys are participating in the campaign.

### Part-time seat belt use

In an effort to convert more part-time users of seat belts to full-time users, the Buckle Up America campaign is collecting, analyzing and interpreting data on part-time use. A comprehensive report is set to be released soon and will be available on the Internet at [www.buckleupamerica.org](http://www.buckleupamerica.org).

## *"Corazon de mi vida":* Boosting safety seat use in the Latino community

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Latino children aged five to 14. Now, an initiative is underway to help Latino parents overcome some cultural and community barriers to using child restraints.

The National Latino Children's Institute (NLCI), the Cuban American National Council, Nationwide Insurance Co. and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have developed *Corazon de mi vida*, a community action program that infuses Latino culture into the campaign to get more



At the Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center in Washington, D.C., Rev. Mark J. Poletunow speaks to parents and children before blessing child seats.

families using child safety seats and buckling up.

NLCI and its partners tapped a key strength in the Latino community—the high value placed on children and families—to tailor the program's message. "*Corazon de mi vida*" means "you are the center of my life." The program translates that devotion into a basic message about child safety seats and seat belt use: "I love you [the child] so much that I will put you in a car seat (and in the back seat) and will wear my own seat belt."

One way *Corazon de mi vida* connects with community members is by incorporating spirituality into its efforts. The development team learned that many Latinos believe God is

responsible for safety and often view the use of seat belts and car seats as a lack of faith. Rather than ignore this belief, the program incorporates it by holding Child Safety Seat Blessings to "help God keep [children] safe." A priest blessing a child safety seat "has the feel of a stamp of approval—it is a cultural necessity," says Ramona Reyes at Nationwide Insurance. The result: Events promoting the use of child safety seats that once struggled to reach a Latino audience now attract many of these families.

Child passenger safety programs around the country can benefit from the *Corazon de mi vida* outreach effort. Safety advocates can order a program kit developed by NLCI and its partners, which provides bilingual educational materials on child passenger safety, including door hangers, bumper stickers, posters and a loteria game. To receive a copy of the kit or to get more information contact NLCI at [www.nlci.org](http://www.nlci.org).

## Liability help for Child Passenger Safety technicians

Certified Child Passenger Safety technicians or instructors now can protect themselves from liability. The American Automobile Association and the International Center for Injury Prevention (ICIP) are offering professional liability insurance to certified Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technicians and technician instructors.

The annual premium on the AAA policy is \$55, with no deductible. The ICIP policy costs \$250 a year and has no deductible.

The policies "allow affordable insurance for everyone," says Elaine Kizewski, ICIP's executive director. Says AAA's Bill Wen: "We hope this will encourage those considering becoming a certified technician to take that step."

The policies cover individuals, not

organizations. And you don't need an insurance policy to qualify for or maintain certification as a CPS technician or instructor.

For information on the AAA policy, contact Bill Wen at 407-444-7960 or [wwen@national.aaa.com](mailto:wwen@national.aaa.com). For information on the ICIP policy, contact Shirley Christianson at 800-344-7580, Ext. 12 or [shirley@cipsafe.org](mailto:shirley@cipsafe.org).

## Coming soon: Standard seat belt law "how-to" guide

Seat belt use often rises after passage of a standard seat belt enforcement law. But the law itself is only the beginning. Seat belt use doesn't soar unless effective enforcement and promotion efforts follow enactment.

To help States make that happen, NHTSA is developing a step-by-step guide for States implementing a new standard enforcement law.

Standard enforcement—now the law in 17 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico—allows law enforcement officers to pull over drivers solely based on seat belt infractions. In most States, officers still can't do that: under "secondary enforcement," officers can only ticket drivers for not wearing their seat belt if they had stopped the driver for another reason.

The new guide will give a basic implementation framework for law enforcement officers, State highway safety officials and others. The guide will include not only pointers about standard enforcement and marketing, but also real-life examples of the activities and programs States have already undertaken.

The new guide is expected to be completed later this year. In the meantime, case studies of States that have successfully implemented standard seat belt laws are available at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/buckleplan/cases/index.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/buckleplan/cases/index.html).



# “Click It or Ticket” goes region-wide (from page 1)

translates into 659 lives saved and \$937 million saved in health care and other costs, he noted.

The results are population-weighted numbers based on observation surveys completed just before the start of the campaign and at the height of enforcement, according to the Preusser Research Group Inc.

Shortly after the successful “Click It or Ticket” campaign in South Carolina in November 2000, Region IV officials, the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign and local highway safety officials banded together to take the campaign region-wide. In January 2001, those early partners began working to build support for the idea and recruit other key partners, in particular, the governors and heads of the State and local law enforcement agencies. Getting such high-level support was critical to the effort. “It’s important that you secure commitments from the top down,” said Ayers. One result: All 3,250 State and local law enforcement agencies in the region participated in the campaign, which produced more than 25,000 checkpoint or patrol events during the enforcement period.

Obtaining top-level support was one component of a five-prong approach

the partners developed to guide the campaign. Another major component was gaining the support of law enforcement through the region-wide law enforcement liaison structure.

Minority outreach also was a major component, in light of concerns about racial profiling. Minority partners provided input on the content and placement of the ads and shared the “Click It or Ticket” message in their communities. In addition, the States held joint meetings with minority organizations, community leaders and law enforcement officials. Those efforts paid off. The campaign won the support of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Georgia and South Carolina, the American Civil Liberties Union in Alabama and other civil rights and church groups.

The other campaign components were using the media and evaluating the campaign’s efforts. The partners formed task forces on the five components and held frequent meetings and conference calls to coordinate actions and get input from all involved.

In May, the campaign began saturating the region with the “Click It or Ticket” enforcement message using

media events and paid advertising. In the first media wave, law enforcement agencies held events educating the public about the coming enforcement effort. Governors held events announcing the second media wave, the paid advertisement campaign.

While each State had its own ad, the “Click It or Ticket” enforcement message was the same. “No matter where you traveled in the region, the message was clear: Law enforcement is serious about saving lives,” said Ayers.

The ad campaign, which ran May 14-28, cost about \$3.5 million. But the partners got even more for their money because media outlets often ran the ads more than once without charge.

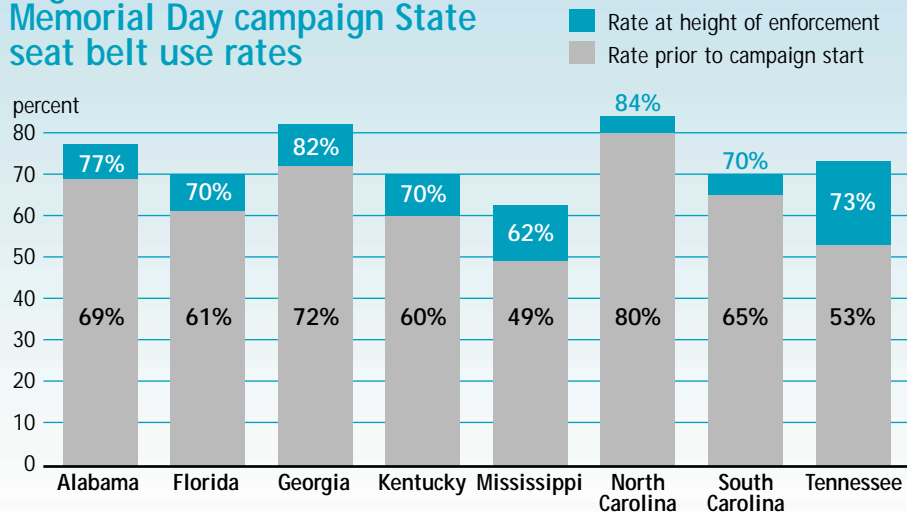
With the message resonating throughout the region, the enforcement crackdown began. From May 21 through June 3 in most of the States, law enforcement agencies held checkpoints and stepped up patrols throughout the region. To reinforce the campaign’s public safety message, law enforcement agencies held the checkpoints or other enforcement activities in high-crash locations.

As part of their strategy, the partners fully evaluated their efforts. A NHTSA-approved survey was conducted before and after the campaign by five States. Mini-surveys were done throughout the campaign to measure the effectiveness of each part of the campaign. And State motor vehicle departments were asked to do written surveys each week.

A conference for all eight States was held August 7 in Atlanta to share the campaign’s State and regional results and determine what could be improved during the next mobilization.

“The exciting part about these campaigns,” said Ayers, “is that they have been so successful in raising seat belt use, reducing injuries and saving lives that States are eagerly planning for future ‘Click It or Ticket’ mobilizations.”

**Region IV “Click It or Ticket” Memorial Day campaign State seat belt use rates**



# Standard seat belt bills face hurdles

**S**tandard enforcement laws for seat belt use save lives, but highway safety advocates face a tough fight getting such measures through State legislatures.

This year has been no different. By mid-March, standard enforcement bills had been introduced in 14 States. By early July, the measures failed in most of these States.

Seventeen States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have standard, or primary, seat belt laws, which allow law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle if they see that the driver or passengers aren't buckled up—treating seat belt violations like any other traffic violation. (Under secondary seat belt laws, an officer cannot stop a driver only because of a seat belt violation.) Seat belt use in States with standard laws is an average 77%, 13 percentage points higher than in States with secondary laws.

Standard enforcement “is the foundation for getting high seat belt use,” says David Kelly, senior program direc-

## A hard loss in Florida: One father's story

For Irv Slosberg, the battle for standard enforcement is personal. In 1996, the Boca Raton, Fla., father of three lost his 14-year-old daughter Dori, a twin, in a horrific car accident that killed five teens and left another paralyzed. Dori wasn't wearing her seat belt.

Turning his loss into legislation, Slosberg won a seat in the Florida House last year and sponsored a standard enforcement bill, the Dori Slosberg Act of 2001.

The bill cleared four major committees with solid support, and hopes were high among safety advocates, who have been pushing the issue with the Legislature for 10 years. But despite Slosberg's heart-wrenching story and compelling statistics, the individual-rights and racial-profiling arguments won the day. The measure failed in the House, 75-34.

Will Slosberg try again? “Absolutely,” says Dorothea Lantz, his legislative assistant. “He said from the beginning that he'd keep trying” until it passes.

tor for Government affairs for the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign. But “passing a [standard enforcement] law is very hard to do,” he notes.

Even the best lobbying efforts by highway safety advocates are no guarantee that a standard enforcement bill will pass. Standard enforcement suffered tough losses in States such as Florida, Massachusetts, Minnesota and Rhode Island, where highway safety experts say lobbying efforts were particularly well-organized and the legislative climate appeared relatively favorable. In Minnesota, Gov. Jesse Ventura's decision to reverse himself and support standard enforcement raised hopes but ultimately wasn't enough to overcome the opposition.

The measures often are defeated by critics' arguments that standard enforcement infringes on individual rights. But supporters counter that the issue goes beyond the individual. “You look at how [not wearing seat belts] impacts society, not just the one individual who doesn't wear seat belts,” says Virginia Corrigan, coordinator of Buckle Up Delaware and injury prevention coordinator for the Christiana Care



In Minnesota, Gov. Jesse Ventura's support wasn't enough to overcome the opposition.

health system in Delaware. A registered nurse who has worked in trauma units for 25 years, Corrigan has had a front-line view of how not wearing seat belts affects society. The number of injured or dead young people brought in who weren't wearing seat belts is “shocking,” she says. “When you see that on a daily basis, it gets personal.”

Armed with a similar passion, highway safety advocates vow to keep fighting despite the setbacks in many states. “You keep at 'em, you keep at 'em,” says Robert P. Murray, senior vice president of corporate affairs for AAA Southern New England. “Traffic safety people are in it for the long haul.”

## Seeking a new standard

Some States where standard enforcement legislation was introduced this year

State	Seat belt use rate 2000 (%)
Delaware	66.1
Florida	64.8
Illinois	70.2
Kansas	61.6
Kentucky	60.0
Massachusetts	50.0
Minnesota	73.4
Nebraska	70.5
Rhode Island	64.4
South Carolina	73.9
Vermont	61.6
Washington	81.6
West Virginia	49.8
Wisconsin	65.4

Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, National Conference of State Legislatures, NHTSA.

# Reaching people with a traffic safety message

**Q:** What's the best way to reach people, buying time on television or holding a press conference?

## Safety links

What's new on NHTSA's web site

- **An at-a-glance guide** to selecting, installing and using child safety seats, and other child passenger safety tips.
  - **A nationwide directory** to help you find a child seat inspection station and certified child passenger safety technicians near you.
- Just go to [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).

*Have a question about seat belts, child safety seats or campaigns encouraging traffic safety? We will find an expert with an answer. Send your questions to [buckleup@aed.org](mailto:buckleup@aed.org).*

**A:** Both approaches work. It depends on your circumstances. If you can afford it, the most effective marketing campaigns are ones that use multiple communication channels. Paid media campaigns, public service messages and earned media efforts all have advantages and drawbacks, but used in combination, they offer an opportunity to reach audiences with multiple yet complementary messages. Here's what each channel offers:

**Paid Media**  
A paid media campaign is an effective—though expensive—way to reach a mass audience with a simple message. It allows you to target specific audiences with persuasive messages that can affect the viewer's awareness, attitudes, beliefs and, potentially, behavior. But conducting a sustained, national paid media campaign is expensive. Both of the major national public health campaigns targeting teens today (anti-drug and anti-tobacco) spend upwards of \$100 million on advertising alone. Behavior change campaigns require more resources than commercial marketing because moving your target from awareness to action

on a complex issue usually requires more repeated message exposure than a campaign promoting a new product.

**Public Service Announcements**  
PSAs can reach a general audience with a general message. Because stations are donating time, the sponsoring organization has no control over when, where and how often the PSA airs.

Tracking data from past PSA campaigns have shown that as much as one-half of PSAs are run late at night. The lack of control over the media placement makes PSAs an ineffective tool for reaching specific or hard-to-reach audiences. Also, some PSAs, if they don't appeal to managers at local broadcast outlets, might get little or no airtime at all.

**Earned Media**  
Having your campaign messages reported in the popular press can greatly enhance the effectiveness of the marketing effort. Called "earned media" because your program staff works with reporters and editors to gain media space for your issue, media coverage gives your campaign credibility and additional exposure. Because most people view press content as more objective than advertising, they are often more receptive to the message. But it is hard to provide repeated exposure to a specific message—and, as in advertising, frequency is as important as reach.

## Q & A

## Media channel characteristics

Paid media	PSA	Earned media
Targeted	Not targeted	Somewhat targeted
Expensive to place	Inexpensive to place	May be inexpensive to place
Placement guaranteed	Placement not guaranteed	Placement not guaranteed
Total control of the message	Near total control of the message	Not much control of the message
Expensive to produce	Expensive to produce	Expense depends on event/story
Talent fees paid every 13 weeks	Talent fees paid yearly	No talent fees

# What's new

**Booster Seats: A Review of the Literature on Best Practices, Fatalities, Use and Misuse Rates, Reasons for Use and Non-use, Current Strategies, and Recommended Future Steps, by the Center for Applied Behavioral and Evaluation Research and the Academy for Educational Development**

"Booster Seats" offers an overview of the leading research, key statistics and critical issues involving the use, non-use and misuse of booster seats. With its easy-to-navigate format, wealth of



pertinent information and generous use of tables and charts, the report is useful to veterans of the child safety arena as well as organizations and individuals trying to quickly get up to speed on the issue.

While the report notes that there is little comprehensive research available specifically on the use of booster seats, it does provide snapshots of a handful of the major research efforts. They include studies conducted or sponsored by the Partners for Child Passenger Safety, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National SAFE KIDS Campaign.

Drawing from that research, the report breaks out specific data on who



## STREET TALK

### How SafetyBeltSafe USA taught parents when to use a booster seat

SafetyBeltSafe USA, a California-based nonprofit traffic safety advocacy and service organization, was deluged every month with calls from concerned parents baffled by a critical question: When should my child be in a booster seat? SafetyBeltSafe USA would tell them about the measurements and weights recommended by experts, but that still left parents frustrated and confused. SafetyBeltSafe USA needed a simpler way to help them confidently address the problem.

#### The approach

Examining the issue from the parent's perspective, SafetyBeltSafe USA found that parents needed information they could understand quickly and apply easily to their own kids. So SafetyBeltSafe USA developed a simple test that parents can use in their own vehicles to determine when a booster seat is necessary. They don't have to consider the child's weight or height. The test boils down to five questions—and one answer:

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Is the lap belt touching the tops of the thighs, not on the tummy?
4. Is the shoulder belt centered on the shoulder and chest?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If the answer to any of those questions is "no," then the child needs a booster seat or child safety seat.

does and doesn't use booster seats and why, how the devices are used, and so on. "Booster Seats" also lists suggestions from parents and experts on steps to take to increase proper use of booster seats. And it notes that the child safety field can draw lessons from other areas, especially behavioral analysis, to help advocates tailor their efforts to the attitudes of parents and

Now when parents call SafetyBeltSafe USA's toll-free help line, operators tell them about the five-step test. SafetyBeltSafe USA also teamed with the Allstate Foundation to produce simple black-and-white fliers promoting the test and to train children at schools about proper restraint use. The training is called "Boosters Are for Big Kids."

#### The results

The beauty of the test is its simplicity, says Stephanie Tombrello, executive director of SafetyBeltSafe USA. "The test directly relates to the real situation. Parents often have two cars. The test helps them determine how their child will be safe in any car seat in any car." The organization is working on a study to quantify the test's effectiveness, but parents seem to like the new approach. "Parents start laughing after I finish with the five-step test, then I know they truly understand," says Tombrello, noting that a lot of parents already have plenty of experience with the fifth step (Can the child be seated like this for the whole trip?). "They giggle, and then I know I've reached them."

Know of a group using a new, effective approach to encourage proper seat belt or child safety seat use? Please send the tip to [buckleup@aed.org](mailto:buckleup@aed.org). Street Talk is a regular feature that highlights innovative tactics for increasing proper seat belt and child safety seat use.

children about booster seats.

"Booster Seats" says a lot in just a few pages. And it can be an effective tool for helping child safety advocates help parents protect their kids.

"Booster Seats" can be found at [www.buckleupamerica.org](http://www.buckleupamerica.org). Click on "Strategy" at the top of the page.



# HAPPENINGS

## Giving kids a boost in Maryland

*In Maryland, car dealerships and kids got into the act during National Child Passenger Safety Week 2001 (February 11–17) to help highlight the importance of buckling up kids correctly in child seats and booster seats.*



LEFT, BELOW: In Annapolis, safety advocates testifying before a Maryland Senate committee recruited kids to help show lawmakers how booster seats help keep kids safe.



TOP: In Rockville, child passenger safety technicians checked safety seats in 380 vehicles at a free car-seat check-up at the Fitzgerald Pontiac Buick GMC dealership.

BOTTOM: Maryland advocates provided a wealth of information.